



# The Enrollment Marketer's Guide to a Winning Value Proposition

# Connect with more students that value what you have to offer.

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The decision of which institution to attend is monumental — not just because of the cost of higher education, but also because of the emotional impact earning a degree can have. At the end of the day, it's not enough to entice students with tuition costs alone. Your prospective students need to make a connection with your institution before they'll feel confident in their enrollment decision.

But how do you differentiate your program offerings in a market that's getting more saturated by the day? What is it about a prospective student that signals they're the right fit for one of your programs? And once you've identified a right-fit student, how do you show them that your school is better for their needs — in a way they'll understand and connect to? These aren't easy questions to answer, and they're even harder to answer concisely — say, in the three seconds your videos have to grab a prospective student's attention.

Defining your institution's value proposition — and just as importantly, an individual value proposition for each of your programs — is one of the most critical aspects of

your enrollment marketing and student recruitment strategy. It can also be one of the most difficult exercises.

As online programs expand every institution's reach, prospective students are going to see the same information and supposed benefits from schools over and over again. In order to truly differentiate your institution to students, you have to push past surface-level value propositions to uncover what really makes your school special. Offering classes online in flexible modalities isn't unique to your school — but partnering with a local nonprofit for hands-on community coursework or striking a deal with a company that can supply your programs with the latest industry technology, for example, are distinctive value propositions.

So where do you start? And how do you differentiate your value proposition from the benefits that your competition offers? Archer can help you answer these questions and more. We've designed a free, downloadable worksheet that will help your institution establish its value proposition and core differentiators to reach and engage more right-fit students.

# Discover Your Institution's Value Proposition

## HOW TO USE THE WORKSHEETS

Use the worksheets on the following pages to define your institution's value proposition(s), which will allow you to effectively capture the attention and interest of your prospective students. Here's a quick summary of what you'll do at each step.

### **Step One: Define Audience**

Define the types of students your institution serves. You'll want to think of typical demographic information like age and location, but also about their motivations for earning a degree.

### **Step Two: Define Goals**

Pinpoint what your students are trying to accomplish by enrolling in higher education. These goals tend to be professional, but don't overlook personal motivations.

### **Step Three: Define Barriers**

Your students are going to face some hurdles that can keep them from succeeding — they might be first-generation students, single parents, or full-time workers. You have to know what barriers are blocking their way if you're going to help them succeed.

### **Step Four: Define Features**

Define the tactics you use to help students overcome these barriers. You'll want to be able to show prospective students, as specifically as possible, how your program or institution will help them reach their goals.

### **Step Five: Define Differentiators**

Determine what's most valuable to the students who attend your institution. You need to be able to show students what makes your program the right fit for them out of all the programs they're considering.

Begin by completing the brand-level worksheet to discover your institution's holistic value proposition(s), then complete the program-level worksheet(s) to learn how to differentiate your program offerings. Finally, follow Archer's guidelines for turning this newly unearthed information into actionable messaging that works to bolster your institution's enrollment marketing strategies.

*For optimal results, make sure any and all vendors (especially your marketing/enrollment vendors) have a copy of these completed worksheets and action plans, and hold them accountable for using them.*

# Value Proposition Worksheet For Your Institution's Brand

01

## DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE(S)

Questions to ask:

- › What types of students does your institution currently enroll?
- › Which types of enrolled students are the most successful?
- › Which categories of students are growing at your institution?

Example:

Adult students in the Dallas, TX area.

Audience:

02

## DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE'S GOAL(S)

Questions to ask:

- › What are your students most typically trying to achieve?  
(List all items that apply, beginning with achievements that apply to the largest segment of students.)

Example:

Career advancement / a promotion.

Goals:

## 03

### DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE'S BARRIERS

#### Questions to ask:

- ▶ What barriers keep your audience from achieving their goals?  
(List all items that apply, beginning with barriers that apply to the largest segment of students.)

#### Example:

Time, money, and understanding the enrollment process.

#### Barriers:

## 04

### DEFINE INSTITUTIONAL FEATURES

#### Questions to ask:

- ▶ What tactics do you use to help students and prospective students overcome these barriers?

#### Example:

Flexible learning formats, small class sizes, personalized learning, programs that are in high demand.

#### Features:

# 05

## DEFINE INSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENTIATORS

### Questions to ask:

- When students enroll in and attend your institution, what do they report to be the most valuable features?

(You'll need to then question whether these are unique to your institution to determine if they are truly differentiators.)

### Example:

Easy **access** to a highly **valuable** education for **in-demand** programs.

### Differentiators:



# Value Proposition Worksheet For Your Programs

## 01

### DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE(S)

#### Questions to ask:

- › What types of students does your program currently enroll?
- › Which types of enrolled students are the most successful?
- › Which categories of students are growing at your program?

#### Example:

Mid-level managers who want to advance their careers

#### Audience:

## 02

### DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE'S GOAL(S)

#### Questions to ask:

- › What are your students most typically trying to achieve?  
(List all items that apply, beginning with achievements that apply to the largest segment of students.)

#### Example:

Career advancement to help eliminate debt and allow a spouse to work part-time.

#### Goals:

## 03

### DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE'S BARRIERS

#### Questions to ask:

- ▶ What barriers keep your audience from achieving their goals?  
(List all items that apply, beginning with barriers that apply to the largest segment of students.)

#### Example:

Time, money, family responsibilities.

#### Barriers:

## 04

### DEFINE INSTITUTIONAL FEATURES

#### Questions to ask:

- ▶ What tactics do you use to help students and prospective students overcome these barriers?

#### Example:

Flexible learning formats, program value

#### Features:



# 05

## DEFINE INSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENTIATORS

### Questions to ask:

- When students enroll in and attend your program, what do they report to be the most valuable features?

(You'll need to then question whether these are unique to your institution to determine if they are truly differentiators.)

### Example:

Easy **access** to a highly **valuable** education with a track record of **career advancement** for graduates.

### Differentiators:



# Craft Your Value Propositions

After you've completed worksheets for your institution and all of your programs, put the findings to work. Once you've completed the exercises, you can create a value proposition for each audience within each worksheet.

Each value proposition can follow this format:

"We help (audience), achieve (goal) by (differentiators) with (features)."

We put this into practice for our own [Audience Intelligence](#) services. See how our value prop came to life below.

## 1. Audience

Colleges and universities in the U.S.

## 2. Audience Goals

Seeking to reach new audiences of prospective students to help grow enrollment.

## 3. Audience Barriers

Expanding brand reach cost-effectively; finding new, untapped audiences of higher education seekers; and converting traffic to inquiries while maintaining or reducing costs-per-enrollment.

## 4. Program Features

Archer's Audience Intelligence services help engage with new audiences of prospective students on social media platforms, delivering high-quality, high-converting inquiries.

## 5. Differentiators

No one else can offer access to our comprehensive audience research and targeting and social media advertising on a performance (cost-per-inquiry) basis.

## THE VALUE PROP

Archer helps colleges and universities seeking to grow enrollment reach and engage new prospective students with access to our **comprehensive audience intelligence** research into education seekers on social media channels, providing both brand exposure and inquiry generation on a CPI basis.

# Now What?

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## Make Them Actionable

Now it's time to translate your value proposition(s) into compelling marketing messaging. Our experts recommend speaking first to prospective students' goals and the barriers they may face. After you've addressed their hesitations, you can provide specific information on how your institution will help them overcome any obstacles with its unique features and differentiators.

Create several messages in a variety of formats designed to appeal to your target audience. Speak to the barriers and resolve each one with your newly discovered value proposition(s). To hone in on your value proposition(s) even further, you can A/B test these messages to see which ones resonate most with your target audiences.

Get real feedback from current students and graduates. Consider surveying your students and asking them directly what their perceived barriers to enrollment were and how your institution helped them overcome those barriers. These conversations also give you the chance to gather testimonials and success stories to highlight in ads and on your website. This will allow you to connect tangible human elements to your value proposition by telling real stories about students you've helped to succeed.

## STILL NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

Our [enrollment marketing](#) experts have helped countless institutions discover and market their unique value propositions. If you need additional help uncovering what is unique about your school and its offerings, [reach out](#) to our team. Let us help you discover your winning value proposition.